become a hub of private diagnostic labs. Various investigations are done in Safdarjung Hospital in the Departments of Lab Medicine, Biochemistry, Microbiology, Histopathology, Blood Bank, Radiology and Hematology. The patient, however, has the choice to get investigation done from outside. The total number of investigations undertaken in the above mentioned Departments per day is 6510 approximately. Moreover, single window system for various investigations including ECG, X-Ray, CT Scan, Ultrasound is in existence in emergency Department. However, for any specialized test for which facilities are not available in the Safdarjung Hospital, the patients are advised to get the same done from outside. CGHS beneficiaries are advised to get the same done from any C.G.H.S. approved center.

Unauthorised reservation from VIP Quota

*259. SHRI JAYANTILAL BAROT:
SHRI LEKHRAJ BACHANI:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that unauthorized persons or institutions are being given confirmed reservations from VIP quota by DCM, Ahmedabad Railway Division of Western Railway;

(b) whether any complaints have been received by the Railways in this respect; and

(c) if so, the action taken or proposed to be taken against the concerned officers in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) and (b) Complaints regarding alleged irregularities in allotment of emergency quota at Ahmedabad have come to notice in which some commercial officers are stated to be involved.

(c) The matter is under investigation.

Medicine pricing policy

†*260. SHRI UDAY PRATAP SINGH: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are contemplating to amend the present policy regarding pricing of medicines;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and whether Government have received complaints of misuse or drawbacks of present policy; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) if so, the action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (c) The Drug Policy, as amended from time to time, is directed towards ensuring abundant availability of quality drugs at reasonable pirces. The Drugs (Prices Control) Orders have been issued in accordance with these policies.

The 74 bulk drugs specified in the First Schedule of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 195 (DPCO, 95) and the furmulations based thereon are under price control and their prices are fixed/revised by the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) in accordance with the provisions of the DPCO, 95.

Prices of non-Scheduled formulations are fixed by the manufacturers themselves keeping in view the various factors like cost of production, marketing/ selling expenses, R&D expenses, trade commission, market competition, product innovation, product quality etc. The Government takes corrective measures where the public interest is found to be adversely affected.

The Government announced the 'Pharmaceutical Policy 2002' in February, 2002. The main objectives of this Policy are, *inter alia*, ensuring abundant availability at reasonable prices within the country of good quality essential pharmaceuticals of mass consumption and strengthening the indigenous capacity for cost effective quality production. However, a public interest litigation filed in the High Court of Karnataka at Bangalore resulted in an Order dated 12.11.02 which stopped the Government from implementing the price control regime of the Parmaceutical Policy 2002. This Department filed a Special Leave Petition (SLP) before the Supreme Court of India against the Order of the Karnataka High Court, which has been admitted as SLP(C) No. 3668/2003.

A Committee under the Chairmanship of Joint Secretary (PI) was constituted to examine the span of price control (including trade margin), in the light of National Common Minimum Programme and the observations of the Supreme Court in SLP No. (C) 3668/2003 and to suggest measures for fulfilling the objective of National Common Minimum Programme to ensure the availability of life saving drugs at reasonable prices.

A Task Force has been constituted under the Chairmanship of the Principal Advisor (PP), Planning Commission to explore various options other than price control for achieving the objective of making available life-saving drugs at reasonable prices.